

HEALING LEAVES

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A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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(ON BEHALF OF THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY).

“The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”
Revelation 22:2

WE have in the 21st and 22nd chapters of the Book of the Revelation a very wonderful description of heaven upon earth. I shall not attempt to go into any prophetic explanations as to when this will be fulfilled, but we know this for certain, for we have it in so many words, that the holy city, New Jerusalem, will descend out of heaven from God, and that, in a word, there will be, for a time at least, a heaven on earth. But inasmuch as heaven, be it where it may, is still heaven, the description of heaven on earth sufficiently benefits us to reveal, in some measure, the present joys and blessings of the celestial state. We shall not make any mistake if we read the passage as hundreds of thousands have done before us, and as all common readers will always persist in doing, as a description of the heavenly state as it is at *present*, for what can come down from heaven but that which is in heaven? The results of the revealed presence of the God of love must be, to His saints, very much the same at all times. The same glory will be revealed, the same happiness bestowed, the same occupations followed, the same fellowship enjoyed. We may, therefore, consider that we have before us a description of what heaven now is and shall be, world without end, save only that the bodies of the saints are not yet raised and therefore, all the minute details may not be fully developed. The glowing metaphors here employed, for we must, to a large extent, regard the language as figurative, are evidently taken from the garden of Eden. That was man's first inheritance and it is a type of his last. That paradise which the first Adam lost us, the second Adam will regain for us, but with added bliss and superior joy. We shall dwell where a river rolls with placid stream, and compasses a land where there is gold, “And the gold of that land is good, there is bdellium and the onyx stone”—a river watering every tree that is pleasant to the sight and flowing hard by the tree of life in the midst of the garden. Yet, though there is a likeness between heaven and Eden, there is a difference, too, for the earthly paradise with all its perfections was still of the earth, earthy. And the second paradise is, like the Lord from heaven, heavenly and divine. The fatal tree of knowledge of good and evil, hedged about by a solemn threat, grows not in the garden of the immortals. They have known evil, but they now, “know the Lord,” and know evil no more. Everything in the divine paradise is fuller and more abundant. The gold, which in Eden lay in the soil, is used in the heavenly paradise to pave the streets. The river has no earthly source, but is “a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” The Lord, who in Eden walked only at solemn intervals, “among the trees of the garden in the cool of the day,” has, in heaven, His tabernacle among men and dwells among them, while the trees which grew in Eden, and ripened their fruits only in autumn, are succeeded by trees with 12 fruitages in the year.

It has been thought that man would have preserved the immortality of his body by eating of the tree of life in Eden and that therefore, when he sinned he was shut out from it, “lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” Some even go so far as to think that the extreme longevity of the antediluvians may have been helped by the remaining influence of that wondrous food upon the constitution of man for many generations. Of that we know nothing, it is all conjecture. It is, however, very customary for expositors to speak of the tree of life in the garden as the sacrament of the primeval age, the eating of whose fruit they conceive to be the grand means of preserving Adam from death. Now, there is a tree of life in heaven, but there is this difference, that it is more accessible—more accessible even than when Adam was in perfection—for if there were but one tree of life in the garden,

the garden was certainly divided by the river which flowed in several streams through it. Therefore, the tree could not always be easily reached from all parts of the garden. In the passage before us, we have the tree of life on either side of the river, which, I suppose, intends that there were many such trees—though there was only one tree as to its kind, yet many in number. The picture presented to the mind's eye would appear to be that of a wide street with a river flowing down the center, like some of the broader canals of Holland, with trees growing on either side, all of them of the same kind, all called the tree of life. I do not know how we can make the figure out in any other way. Some have represented the tree as only one and growing in the *bottom* of the river, rising out of the water, and so sending boughs on either side, being, itself, so large as to shade all the city. Such a conception is almost monstrous. But to conceive of many trees of life, all one tree as to quality and nature, growing all along the street, is to present a beautiful image which can very readily be conceived by the mind. At any rate, to all the inhabitants of heaven the tree of life is equally and perpetually accessible. They may come at it when they may. No cherub's flaming sword stands there to keep them back, but they may always come and eat of its 12 fruitages and pluck its healing leaves—

*“Joy here holds court within its own metropolis.
And through its midst the crystal river flows
Exhaustless from the everlasting throne,
Shaded on either side by trees of life
Which yield in still unvarying interchange
Their ripe vicissitude of monthly fruits
Amid their clustering leaves medicinal.”*

We are about to speak only of the *leaves* of this true *arbor vitae*, “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Of what can this tree be a type but of our Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation? What can it signify but that the presence of Christ preserves the inhabitants of heaven forever free from sickness, while beyond heaven, the precincts among the nations, the saving influence is scattered? As the leaves fall from the trees, so does sacred influence descend from our Lord Jesus in heaven down to the sons of men. And as the leaves are the least precious products of a fruit-bearing tree, so the least things that have to do with Him and come from Him have a healing virtue in them. I shall handle the text very briefly *in reference to heaven* and then, at full length, endeavor to bring out its relation *to earth*, as the Holy Spirit may enable me.

I. In REFERENCE TO HEAVEN. If you read the passage you will see that the heavenly city is described as *having an abundance of all manner of delights*. Do men rejoice in wealth? “The very streets are paved with gold exceedingly clear and fine.” The gates are pearls and the walls are built of precious stones. No palace of the Caesars or of the Indian Moguls could rival the gorgeous riches of the city of the Great King—

*“That city with the jeweled crest
Like some new-lighted sun.
A blaze of burning amethyst,
Ten thousand orbs in one.”*

In our cities, we feel greatly the need of light. It must have been a dreary age when our ancestors groped their way at night through unlighted streets, or gathered poor comfort from the feeble, struggling rays of a poor candle placed over each householder's door. The heavenly city knows no night at all and consequently, needs no candle. Indeed, its endless day is independent of the sun itself, “For the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Conveniences for worship are terribly needed in many of our great cities, and it is a good work to erect temples in which worshippers may assemble. But, speaking paradoxically, heaven is well-supplied in this respect, because of an utter absence both of the need of such places and of the places themselves. “I saw no temple therein,” for, indeed, the whole place is a temple. And every street is, in the highest sense, hallowed ground. O blessed place, where we shall not need to enter into our closet to worship our Father who is in heaven, but shall, in the open street, behold the unveiled vision of God. O blessed time, when there shall be no Sabbaths, but one endless Sabbath! O joy of joys when there shall be no breaking up of happy congregations, but where the general

assembly and church of the firstborn shall be met for an everlasting *service* and spend it all in glorifying God.

Cities on earth should, more and more, strive after purity. I am glad that more attention is being paid to cleanliness. Too long has the age of filth made the crowded populations the prey of disease and death. Up yonder in heaven, the sanitary measures are perfection for, “There shall by no means enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination or makes a lie.” There, every inhabitant is without fault before the throne of God, having neither spot nor wrinkle. There, everything healthy, everything holy, and the thrice Holy One Himself is in their midst. As for the necessities under which glorified beings may be placed, we know but very little about them, but certainly, if they need to drink, there is the river of the water of life, clear as crystal. And if they require to eat, there are abundant fruits ripening each month upon that wondrous tree. All that saints can possibly need or desire will be abundantly supplied. No pining want or grim anxiety shall tempt them to ask the question, “What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or, with what shall we be clothed?” “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”

Nor is there merely provision made for bare necessities—their love of beauty is considered. The city itself shines “like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” And her glorious foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones, insomuch that her light, as seen afar by the nations, gladdens them and attracts them to her. A city whose streets are lined with trees laden with luscious fruits must be lovely beyond all expression. They said of the earthly Jerusalem, “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.” But what shall we say of you, O Jerusalem above? Zion! Zion! Our happy home where our Father dwells, where Jesus manifests His love, where so many of our brethren have wended their happy way, to which our steps are evermore directed! Blessed are the men that stand in your streets and worship within your gates! When shall we, also, behold your brightness and drink of the river of your pleasures? Thus, in all respects, the new Jerusalem is furnished. Even with medicine it is supplied, and though we might suppose it to be no more needed, yet it is a joy to perceive that it is there to prevent all maladies in those whom aforesaid it has healed. Leaves for health are plentiful, above, and therefore, the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.”

As everything good is present, our text hints that *nothing ill is there*. One of the worst ills that can happen to a man is sickness, for, if he is suffering from disease, his gold is cold and cheerless metal. If he is languishing, the light is dark in his tabernacle. If he pines away with pain, he cannot enjoy his food—neither is beauty any longer fair to him. But there can be no sickness in heaven because the tree of life bestows immortal health on all beneath its shade. Its leaves exhale a balmy influence, fostering the vigor of immortality. Sickness and suffering are banished by this tree of life. “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.” As want is banished, as darkness is unknown, as infirmity is shut out, as anxiety and doubt and fear and dread are far away, so will all bodily and spiritual disease be forever removed.

It is, in heaven, according to our text, again, that there grows the tree which is not only health to heaven, but which *brings healing to the nations here below*. Heaven is the abode of Jesus and Jesus is the tree of life. If any man would be healed of the guilt of sin, he must look to the eternal merits of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, who is now upon the throne of God. If any man would be saved from daily temptation and trial, he must look to our advocate in glory who intercedes for us and pleads that, when sifted as wheat, our faith may not fail. If anyone of us would be saved from spiritual death, we must look to Jesus, for He lives at the right hand of the Father, for because He lives, we shall also live. “He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” I say that Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master, is in heaven and is there comparable to a tree planted in the very center of the city. Under His broad shadow, the redeemed delight to sit, and His leaves, as they are wafted down to earth, bring health with them. If we would be healed, we must gather those leaves and apply them to the wounds and bruises of our souls and we shall surely recover. Look upward, then, by means of the Scripture before us, to heaven, and see it

full of every good. See it purged of every ill, and see in it the great conduit Head, from which abundant streams of healing flow down to men below.

II. Now, let us come practically to the text IN REFERENCE TO OURSELVES BELOW. “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” There is, then, an abundance of healing power in Jesus Christ and His salvation. Not only is His fruit sweet and nourishing, but the leaves, the little things, as it were, about Christ, are full of healing virtue.

We will begin our meditation upon the truth of the text by noticing that *all the nations are sick*. Leaves are provided for their healing which would be superfluous if they did not require to be healed. We have, in our time, heard great talk about discovering pure, unsophisticated tribes, beautiful in native innocence, untainted with the vices of civilization. But it has turned out to be all talk. Travelers have penetrated into the heart of Africa and they have found these naked innocents—but they have turned out to be “hateful and hating one another.” Voyagers have landed upon lovely islets of the sea and found unsophisticated innocents eating each other! They have gone into the backwoods and discovered—

*“The poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind,”*

but they have found him cunning as a fox and cruel as a wolf. Though Pope tells us that the true God is—

*“Father all in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,”*

yet we find neither sages nor savages so worshipping unless the gospel has instructed them. No, the savage nations have been found so morally sick that their customs have shocked humanity and men have turned from them with horror. Alas, poor human nature, even apart from the many evil inventions of civilization, your disease is terrible.

Neither have nations been delivered from the dread malady of sin by refinement and culture. They tell us a great deal about the wonderful perfection of the ancient Greeks, and certainly, they did understand how to draw the human form. And for delineating physical grace and beauty, we cannot rival their sculptors, but when we come to look at the Greek *moral* form, how graceless and uncomely. The ordinary morals of a Greek were too horrible to be described. When Paul felt it absolutely necessary to speak of them, he was obliged to write that terrible first chapter of Romans, which no man can read without a blush, or close without a sigh that such an indictment was so sadly just. God forbid that the filthiness which the ancients tolerated should ever be revived among us; their very sages were not clear from unmentionable crimes. The Hindus and Chinese, those polished nations of modern times, do they excel? Is it not a fact that India reeks with lasciviousness which will not endure to be thought upon? Ah, Lord God, you know! All the nations need healing, our own among them. If you doubt it, open your eyes and ears. Do not iniquities abound? Are not profanities to be heard in our very streets? Go to the west end and see its fashionable sin, or to the east end and see its more open wickedness. Or stay on this side the Thames and mark the degradation of thousands. Overwhelming evidence will come before you to show that our nation needs healing, if you traverse the streets beneath the pale light of the moon, or even pass the doors of those haunts of gaiety which have, of late, been so enormously multiplied.

And all individuals in every nation need healing. It is not that some of us are sick and some whole by nature, but we are altogether fallen, and all of us are born in sin. The evil is in our nature from the very beginning and nothing within the reach of mere man can purge away the evil, let him dream as he may.

There is but one cure for the nations—the leaves of the tree. There grows no healing herb but the one plant of renown. There is one sacred fountain, to wash, therein, is health—there is but one, it was opened on Calvary. There is one great Physician who lays His hands on men and they are restored—there is but one. Those who pretend that their hands can minister salvation, and that drops of water from their fingers can bring regeneration, are accursed. No, there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there—the balm is at the cross. The Physician is at the right hand of God.

Jesus is pictured, here, as a blessed tree whose leaves heal the nations. Now the point of the text is this, that *the very leaves are healing*, from which I gather that the least thing about Christ is healing. It is

said of the blessed man in the first Psalm, “His leaf, also, shall not wither.” God takes care of the little things, the trifles of believers, and here, of our Lord, it is said, “The leaves are for the healing of the nations.” That is to say, even His common things, His lower blessings of divine grace are full of virtue. Many know but very little about Jesus Christ, but if they believe on Him, that little heals them. How very few of us know much of our Lord; some only know that He came into the world to save sinners. I wish that they knew more, so that they could feed upon the fruits of the tree of life. But even to know that is salvation to them, for the leaves heal the nations. Do you know yourself a sinner? Will you have Christ to be a Savior? Soul, will you rely upon His precious blood to make expiation for your sin? Then, though you have not yet reached up to the golden apples, yet since a *leaf* has fallen upon you, it will save you. The touch of His hand opened deaf ears. The spittle of His lips enlightened blind eyes. The look of His eyes softened hard hearts. The least fragment of this sovereign remedy has omnipotence in it.

We may also learn that the most humble and most timid faith in Jesus Christ will save. It is a grand thing to believe in Jesus Christ with all your heart, and soul, and strength. It is delightful never to doubt, but to go from strength to strength until you come to full assurance of understanding. But if you cannot thus mount up with wings as eagles, you will be saved if you come limping to Jesus. If you have but a mustard-seed of faith, you are saved. She who in the great crowd touched but the hem of the Savior’s garment, found that virtue flowed out of Him and came to her. Pluck a leaf of this tree by your poor trembling faith, and if you dare not take more than that, yet shall it make you whole.

Beloved, after we have been saved from our sin by faith in Jesus Christ, it is very wonderful how everything about Christ will help to purge the blood, which as yet is not cleansed. Study His example and as you look at the lovely traits of His character—His gentleness and yet His boldness, His consecration to our cause and His zeal for the glory of God—you will find, as you value His excellences, they will exercise a curative power over you. You will be ashamed to be selfish, you will be ashamed to be idle, you will be ashamed to be proud when you see what Jesus was. Study Him and you will grow like He. If we take His precepts, and I hope we prize them as highly as we do His doctrines, there is not a command of our Lord but what possesses a sacred power, by the application of the Holy Spirit, to cure some fault or other of our character. Do as He bids you and you shall be made whole. Why, there is not a word that ever fell from those dear lips but what bears healing in it for some one or other of the thousand ills that have befallen our humanity. It is a sweet thing to get even a broken text from His mouth. His least words are better than the best of others. Lay a word from Him, like a grain of medicine, upon your tongue and keep it there all day—with what a flavor it fills the mouth! How sweetly it perfumes the breath! It is a grand thing to bind a promise round your arm—how strong it makes each sinew! How forceful for the battle of life. It is a blessed thing to take His cheering words, which are as fragrant as “a cluster of camphire,” and carry them in your bosom, for they chase away sadness and inspire dauntless courage. A word of His, being *His*, and recognized as *His* and coming home to the heart as *His*, brings healing to head and heart, conscience and imagination, desire and affection. A leaf of the tree of life is a medicine fitted to raise the dead. Do you not know its power by a joyful experience? Blessed be God, some of us know it right well, and can bear glad witness to its matchless power.

Then, too, *this medicine heals all sorts of diseases*. The text puts it, “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” It does not say of this or that malady, but by its silence it teaches us that the medicine is universal in its curative power. Take this medicine, then, dear friends, to any man, whoever he may be, and let it be applied by the Spirit of God, and it will heal him of whatever disease he has because the gospel strikes at the root of all diseases. Truly it exercises power over all the different branches of the upas tree of evil, but it does so by laying the axe at the root, for it deals with sin, the sin of unbelief, the sin of not loving God. No medicine can ever heal all maladies unless it eradicates the root of the evil and creates a fountain of health. Now, the gospel applied by the Spirit of God is radical. It goes to the root of the matter, operates upon the heart, and purifies the issues of life. Human precepts and methods of morality lop the branches, but leave the trunk of the deadly tree untouched—but this cuts the taproot and tears away the evil growth from beneath the soil. For this cause it is able to remove all diseases.

This medicine heals disease because it searches into the innermost nature. Some medicines are only for the skin—others will only touch a few organs and those not vital. But the leaves of the gospel tree, when taken as medicine, penetrate the mind and search the heart. Their searching operations divide between the joints and the marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. A wondrous medicine this! It searches the soul through and through and never ceases its operations till it has purged the entire manhood of every relic of sin and made it completely clean. Lord, give us these leaves! Lord, give us these leaves continually! Create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us. “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.” But this can never be unless You give us to drink of this most potent medicine.

These leaves prevent the recurrence of disease by enabling the man, from then on, to find good in all that comes to him. A person diseased, if healed, may, by the food which he shall afterwards receive, bring on the disease again. Place a man under certain conditions which cause him an illness—you may heal him—but if you lead him back to those conditions, he may soon be ailing again. And here, in such a world as this, even if Christ healed us today, we should be sick to death tomorrow if the medicine had not some wondrous continuance of power. And so it is. For all things that come to us after conversion are changed, because we are changed. All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. Have we earthly joy? We no longer idolize it, but it now points us to God, the Giver. Have we earthly sorrow? We dare not despair because of it, for we know who has ordained it. Why should a child of God complain who knows that there is love in every chastening stroke of his Father’s rod? What we once called good is now really good to us. What we called ill is no longer ill to us, for the leaves of the tree of life are an infallible antidote. What would have been our poison is now our food, and what might have destroyed us, now builds us up.

This wondrous medicine abides in the system as a source of health. “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” Other medicine taken into the system acts in its own manner and that is an end of it, but this abides. These healing leaves change the life blood, affect the spirits, and make the nature other than it was before. Yonder in heaven, those faces which look so bright and comely, fresher than new born babes, owe their freshness to these healing leaves. And so until the glory life begins, the abiding power of the healing leaves keeps the soul of the believer in perpetual health and will keep him so, world without end.

I have shown that the leaves will heal all diseases. I will occupy a minute with the glad truth that *these leaves heal whole nations*. They are suited to the peculiarities of differing nations. The gospel has never been carried to a people who did not need it, or whom it did not suit. It has been found equally applicable to the ignorant African and the subtle Hindu. No man has been found too degraded for its operation, nor too civilized for its benefits. The gospel has such abundant power that it heals nations and, “nations,” is a large word, comprehending millions. But the leaves of this tree can heal countless armies of men, and it will—

*“ . . . Never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are saved to sin no more.”*

It is a happy circumstance that an agent of such potency is diffusible by the simplest means. A medicine consisting of leaves may be carried by the apothecary where he wills—it is no cumbrous matter. So may we carry the gospel to the utmost ends of the earth—and we will carry it and send it to every habitation. The winds shall waft it, the waves shall bear it wherever man is found. These leaves are not cumbrous like the stage properties of Popery, but are readily scattered, and wherever they go, no climate injures them. The cold of Greenland has not been too severe to prevent the Greenlander rejoicing in the Savior’s blood. And the heat of the torrid zone has not been too intense to prevent believers from rejoicing in the Sun of Righteousness. No, beloved, the gospel heals nations wherever the nations may be and readily heals them of the direst miseries and the blackest crimes. It is the cure for poverty, by making men wise and economical. It is the cure for slavery, teaching men to love their fellows and respect the rights of all. It is the cure for drunkenness, weaning the drunkard from his filthy appetite, saving him from the spell which binds him. The gospel is the only preventive for war. We shall need no blood-red soldiery when

once the warriors of the Cross have won the day. This is the cure for those foul evils which are the curse of our social economies, which human laws too often increase instead of remove. This shall purge us from every form of knavery, rebellion and discontent, and this only. God grant that its healing influences may drop upon the nations thick as leaves in Vallambrosa, till that golden age shall dawn in which the world shall be the abode of moral health.

I must remind you, before I pass from this, and it is a very sweet thing to remind you of, *that this medicine is given and appointed for the very purpose of healing*. I draw your attention to this for the comfort of any who feel their sickness this morning—"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." You look up to this tree and say, "I am sick at heart. I know that here is my cure, but may I dare to partake of it?" Partake freely, for the tree was planted on purpose for you. In the eternal purpose and decree of God, Christ was given to heal the nations. In actual fulfillment, He has healed nations—many nations already enjoy a partial health because multitudes of individuals in those nations have been healed. Great works have been done in the Isles of the Sea. When I think of England, and of the gems of the Southern Sea, and of Madagascar, the Lord seems to have a peculiar favor towards the isles, for in the islands the gospel has spread more abundantly than elsewhere—"Let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." The tree is planted with intent that its leaves should heal—you need not, then, hesitate and inquire, "May I be healed?" It grows for the sick. Are you sick? It grows for you. The other day I was thirsty and passed a drinking fountain. I never paused to ask whether I might drink, for I knew it was placed there for the thirsty, and being thirsty, I drank. Who hesitates, for a moment, when he is in a lonely spot upon the beach and finds that there is health in every billow, to strip himself and plunge into the wave? Does he ask if he may? Surely God has spread the ocean that man may bathe. If I want to breathe, being in the air, I ask no man's liberty to breathe, nor do I sigh for God's leave, either, for did not He give me liberty when He gave me lungs and bade the breezes blow? Since you see Christ before you, brethren, take Christ! You need not ask any man's liberty, nor pine for divine permission. Has He not said, "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely"? He bids you receive. He commands you to believe and He threatens you if you do not. He says to His servants—"Compel them to come in." And as to those who refuse to come, He says, "He that believes not shall be damned." What fuller leave or license can be imagined?

These words to close with. Are you sick this morning? Take these leaves freely. Are you very sick? The stronger is the reason you should take them. You are sinful. Past guilt troubles you—take the leaves again and again. Worse than that, tendencies to evil afflict you. You want to be rid of them—feed on the purging leaves as long as you live and they will prove an antidote. You need not think that you will exhaust the merit or power of Christ, for if the fruit is described as coming 12 times in the year, how abundant must the leaves be? There is enough in Christ for every sin-sick sinner. If the sinner does but come to Jesus, he shall find no stint in Jesus' healing power. Though the sick soul is full of leprosy, the Savior is full of grace. Put forth your finger, sister, and touch the hem of Jesus' garment now. Lift your eyes, sinner, look to Christ on the cross. Though He seems far away from you, there is life in a glance, however dim the eyes or distant the view. Come to this tree—its very leaves will heal you.

Last of all, are you healed? Well, then, scatter these leaves. Are you saved? Speak of Jesus Christ to everybody. I wish you to teach others a whole Christ, if you can. I desire, always, to make my ministry like Simeon's action when he took the Redeemer altogether into his arms, and said, "Lord, now let You Your servant depart in peace." There was a long span of time between Simeon, with the Son of the Highest in his arms, and the woman who touched the hem of the Master's garment—yet both have gone to heaven—and there is a good span of time between the Christian who can embrace a whole Christ, and a poor timid one who can only tremblingly hope in Him.

If you cannot tell others all about Christ, and give them the fruit of the tree, go and give them the leaves. And one very convenient way of doing so is that which you may help today, by aiding the Religious Tract Society, the friend of us all, on whose behalf I will add a word or two. "The leaves of the tree"—that is to say, even little portions and single pages about Christ will do good. It is a rule of the Tract Society that every tract shall have enough of Christ in it to save a soul if God shall bless it. Do not despise a mere leaf, or as you say, "a leaflet," for if Christ is in it, it is a leaf of the tree and He will bless

it. Scatter, then, the gospel leaflets. Perhaps you have not the means to distribute Bibles and larger books—cover, then, your pathway with tracts. Large portions of our country still need wide distributions of tracts and all the world outside our country needs the gospel, and needs the gospel in the printed form. Scatter the leaves. Let them fall as thickly as leaves descend in the last days of autumn. Scatter them everywhere, since they are for the healing of the nations. The Tract Society, however, not only provides us with very excellent tracts, but it brings out books upon common subjects written in a religious tone. And this class of literature I hope will be multiplied, because people will not always read books on religious topics, but will read works on other subjects—and when these are written in a religious spirit, they will exercise the most healthful influence. These books are not exactly the fruits of the life-giving tree, but they are leaves, and life is in them. I am glad to see the Society bringing out pictures to hang on cottage walls and little illustrative texts done in colors, and the like, for anything about Christ will do good. It is wonderful how a little thing may save a soul, if Christ is in it. “A verse may strike him from whom a sermon flees,” and a picture on a wall may awaken a train of thought in a man who would not listen to that same thought if spoken in words.

Remember Colonel Gardiner and his remarkable conversion by looking at a picture of Christ upon the cross. While waiting to fulfill an assignment of the most infamous kind, he saw a picture of our dying Lord, and under it written—“I did all this for you, what have you done for Me?” The assignment was never kept and the colonel became a brave soldier for Jesus Christ. Possibly we may not think well of representations of the crucifixion, which is a theme beyond the painters’ art, but there can be no question that it is our duty to set forth Christ among the people by our speech, so that he may be seen by their mind’s eye, evidently crucified among them.

Make the passing throng see the gospel in every corner of the streets if you can. Paste up texts of Scripture among business announcements. Hang them up in your kitchens, in your parlors, and in your drawing rooms. I hate to see Christian men hang up abominable Popish things, as they sometimes do, because they happen to be works of art. Burn every one of such artful works, whether prints or paintings. I would take the hammer and administer it with an iconoclastic zeal on all images and pictures of saints and virgins, and the like, which do but tempt men to idolatry. Do not degrade your houses by anything which insults your God, but let your adornments be such as may lead men’s thoughts aright. And never let a man say, in hell, “I was misled by a work of art on your wall which was also a work of the devil and suggested evil thoughts.” Everywhere bring Christ to the front and scatter His words, like leaves from the tree. If you cannot do more, do this and show your gratitude to your Lord.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 21, 22:1-5.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—145, 867, 539.

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